

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 50.]

SATURDAY, APRIL 7, 1860.

[PRICE 2d.]

THE WOMAN IN WHITE.

MISS HALCOMBE'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED.

JULY 5TH. I had only got as far as the top of the stairs, when the locking of Laura's door suggested to me the precaution of also locking my own door, and keeping the key safely about me while I was out of the room. My journal was already secured, with other papers, in the table-drawer, but my writing materials were left out. These included a seal, bearing the common device of two doves drinking out of the same cup; and some sheets of blotting-paper, which had the impression on them of the closing lines of my writing in these pages, traced during the past night. Distorted by the suspicion which had now become a part of myself, even such trifles as these looked too dangerous to be trusted without a guard—even the locked table-drawer seemed to be not sufficiently protected, in my absence, until the means of access to it had been carefully secured as well.

I found no appearance of any one having entered the room while I had been talking with Laura. My writing materials (which I had given the servant instructions never to meddle with) were scattered over the table much as usual. The only circumstance in connexion with them that at all struck me was, that the seal lay tidily in the tray with the pencils and the wax. It was not in my careless habits (I am sorry to say) to put it there; neither did I remember putting it there. But, as I could not call to mind, on the other hand, where else I had thrown it down, and as I was also doubtful whether I might not, for once, have laid it mechanically in the right place, I abstained from adding to the perplexity with which the day's events had filled my mind, by troubling it afresh about a trifle. I locked the door; put the key in my pocket; and went down stairs.

Madame Fosco was alone in the hall, looking at the weather-glass.

"Still falling," she said. "I am afraid we must expect more rain."

Her face was composed again to its customary expression and its customary colour. But the hand with which she pointed to the dial of the weather-glass still trembled. Could she have told her husband already, that she had overheard Laura reviling him, in my company, as a "Spy?" My strong suspicion that she must have told

him; my irresistible dread (all the more overpowering from its very vagueness) of the consequences which might follow; my fixed conviction, derived from various little self-betrays which women notice in each other, that Madame Fosco, in spite of her well-assumed external civility, had not forgiven her niece for innocently standing between her and the legacy of ten thousand pounds—all rushed upon my mind together; all impelled me to speak, in the vain hope of using my own influence and my own powers of persuasion for the atonement of Laura's offence.

"May I trust to your kindness to excuse me, Madame Fosco, if I venture to speak to you on an exceedingly painful subject?"

She crossed her hands in front of her, and bowed her head solemnly, without uttering a word, and without taking her eyes off mine for a moment.

"When you were so good as to bring me back my handkerchief," I went on, "I am very, very much afraid you must have accidentally heard Laura say something which I am unwilling to repeat, and which I will not attempt to defend. I will only venture to hope that you have not thought it of sufficient importance to be mentioned to the Count?"

"I think it of no importance whatever," said Madame Fosco, sharply and suddenly. "But," she added, resuming her icy manner in a moment, "I have no secrets from my husband, even in trifles. When he noticed, just now, that I looked distressed, it was my painful duty to tell him why I was distressed; and I frankly acknowledge to you, Miss Halcombe, that I have told him."

I was prepared to hear it, and yet she turned me cold all over when she said those words.

"Let me earnestly entreat you, Madame Fosco—let me earnestly entreat the Count—to make some allowances for the sad position in which my sister is placed. She spoke while she was smarting under the insult and injustice inflicted on her by her husband—and she was not herself when she said those rash words. May I hope that they will be considerably and generously forgiven?"

"Most assuredly," said the Count's quiet voice, behind me. He had stolen on us, with his noiseless tread, and his book in his hand, from the library.

"When Lady Glyde said those hasty words,"

he went on, "she did me an injustice, which I lament—and forgive. Let us never return to the subject, Miss Halcombe; let us all comfortably combine to forget it, from this moment."

"You are very kind," I said; "you relieve me inexpressibly——"

I tried to continue—but his eyes were on me; his deadly smile, that hides everything, was set, hard and unwavering, on his broad, smooth face. My distrust of his unfathomable falseness, my sense of my own degradation in stooping to conciliate his wife and himself, so disturbed and confused me, that the next words failed on my lips, and I stood there in silence.

"I beg you on my knees to say no more, Miss Halcombe—I am truly shocked that you should have thought it necessary to say so much." With that polite speech, he took my hand—oh, how I despise myself! oh, how little comfort there is, even in knowing that I submitted to it for Laura's sake!—he took my hand, and put it to his poisonous lips. Never did I know all my horror of him till then. That innocent familiarity turned my blood, as if it had been the vilest insult that a man could offer me. Yet I hid my disgust from him—I tried to smile—I, who once mercilessly despised deceit in other women, was as false as the worst of them, as false as the Judas whose lips had touched my hand.

I could not have maintained my degrading self-control—it is all that redeems me in my own estimation to know that I could not—if he had still continued to keep his eyes on my face. His wife's tigerish jealousy came to my rescue, and forced his attention away from me, the moment he possessed himself of my hand. Her cold blue eyes caught light; her dull white cheeks flushed into bright colour; she looked years younger than her age, in an instant.

"Count!" she said. "Your foreign forms of politeness are not understood by Englishwomen."

"Pardon me, my angel! The best and dearest Englishwoman in the world understands them." With those words, he dropped my hand, and quietly raised his wife's hand to his lips, in place of it.

I ran back up the stairs, to take refuge in my own room. If there had been time to think, my thoughts, when I was alone again, would have caused me bitter suffering. But there was no time to think. Happily for the preservation of my calmness and my courage, there was time for nothing but action.

The letters to the lawyer and to Mr. Fairlie, were still to be written; and I sat down at once, without a moment's hesitation, to devote myself to them. There was no multitude of resources to perplex me—there was absolutely no one to depend on, in the first instance, but myself. Sir Percival had neither friends nor relatives in the neighbourhood whose intercession I could attempt to employ. He was on the coldest terms—in some cases, on the worst terms—with the families of his own rank and

station who lived near him. We two women had neither father, nor brother, to come to the house, and take our parts. There was no choice, but to write those two doubtful letters—or to put Laura in the wrong and myself in the wrong, and to make all peaceable negotiation in the future impossible, by secretly escaping from Blackwater Park. Nothing but the most imminent personal peril could justify our taking that second course. The letters must be tried first; and I wrote them.

I said nothing to the lawyer about Anne Catherick; because (as I had already hinted to Laura) that topic was connected with a mystery which we could not yet explain, and which it would therefore be useless to write about to a professional man. I left my correspondent to attribute Sir Percival's disgraceful conduct, if he pleased, to fresh disputes about money matters; and simply consulted him on the possibility of taking legal proceedings for Laura's protection, in the event of her husband's refusal to allow her to leave Blackwater Park for a time, and return with me to Limmeridge. I referred him to Mr. Fairlie for the details of this last arrangement—I assured him that I wrote with Laura's authority—and I ended by entreating him to act in her name, to the utmost extent of his power, and with the least possible loss of time.

The letter to Mr. Fairlie occupied me next. I appealed to him on the terms which I had mentioned to Laura as the most likely to make him bestir himself; I enclosed a copy of my letter to the lawyer, to show him how serious the case was; and I represented our removal to Limmeridge as the only compromise which would prevent the danger and distress of Laura's present position from inevitably affecting her uncle as well as herself, at no very distant time.

When I had done, and had sealed and directed the two envelopes, I went back with the letters to Laura's room, to show her that they were written.

"Has anybody disturbed you?" I asked, when she opened the door to me.

"Nobody has knocked," she replied. "But I heard some one in the outer room."

"Was it a man or a woman?"

"A woman. I heard the rustling of her gown."

"A rustling like silk?"

"Yes; like silk."

Madame Fosco had evidently been watching outside. The mischief she might do by herself, was little to be feared. But the mischief she might do, as a willing instrument in her husband's hands, was too formidable to be overlooked.

"What became of the rustling of the gown when you no longer heard it in the ante-room?" I inquired. "Did you hear it go past your wall, along the passage?"

"Yes. I kept still, and listened; and just heard it."

"Which way did it go?"

"Towards your room."

I considered again. The sound had not caught my ears. But, then, I was deeply absorbed in my letters; and I write with a heavy hand, and a quill pen, scraping and scratching noisily over the paper. It was more likely that Madame Fosco would hear the scraping of my pen than that I should hear the rustling of her dress. Another reason (if I had wanted one) for not trusting my letters to the post-bag in the hall.

Laura saw me thinking. "More difficulties!" she said, wearily; "more difficulties and more dangers!"

"No dangers," I replied. "Some little difficulty, perhaps. I am thinking of the safest way of putting my two letters into Fanny's hands."

"You have really written them, then? Oh, Marian, run no risks—pray, pray run no risks!"

"No, no—no fear. Let me see—what o'clock is it now?"

It was a quarter to six. There would be time for me to get to the village inn, and to come back again, before dinner. If I waited till the evening, I might find no second opportunity of safely leaving the house.

"Keep the key turned in the lock, Laura," I said, "and don't be afraid about me. If you hear any inquiries made, call through the door, and say that I am gone out for a walk."

"When shall you be back?"

"Before dinner, without fail. Courage, my love. By this time to-morrow, you will have a clear-headed, trustworthy man acting for your good. Mr. Gilmore's partner is our next best friend to Mr. Gilmore himself."

A moment's reflection, as soon as I was alone, convinced me that I had better not appear in my walking-dress, until I had first discovered what was going on in the lower part of the house. I had not ascertained yet whether Sir Percival was in-doors or out.

The singing of the canaries in the library, and the smell of tobacco-smoke that came through the door, which was not closed, told me at once where the Count was. I looked over my shoulder, as I passed the doorway; and saw, to my surprise, that he was exhibiting the docility of the birds, in his most engagingly polite manner, to the housekeeper. He must have specially invited her to see them—for she would never have thought of going into the library of her own accord. The man's slightest actions had a purpose of some kind at the bottom of every one of them. What could be his purpose here?

It was no time then to inquire into his motives. I looked about for Madame Fosco, next; and found her following her favourite circle, round and round the fish-pond. I was a little doubtful how she would meet me, after the outbreak of jealousy, of which I had been the cause so short a time since. But her husband had tamed her in the interval; and she now spoke to me with the same civility as usual. My only object in addressing myself to her was

to ascertain if she knew what had become of Sir Percival. I contrived to refer to him indirectly; and, after a little fencing on either side, she at last mentioned that he had gone out.

"Which of the horses has he taken?" I asked, carelessly.

"None of them," she replied. "He went away, two hours since, on foot. As I understood it, his object was to make fresh inquiries about the woman named Anne Catherick. He appears to be unreasonably anxious about tracing her. Do you happen to know if she is dangerously mad, Miss Halcombe?"

"I do not, Countess."

"Are you going in?"

"Yes, I think so. I suppose it will soon be time to dress for dinner."

We entered the house together. Madame Fosco strolled into the library, and closed the door. I went at once to fetch my hat and shawl. Every moment was of importance, if I was to get to Fanny at the inn and be back before dinner.

When I crossed the hall again, no one was there; and the singing of the birds in the library had ceased. I could not stop to make any fresh investigations. I could only assure myself that the way was clear, and then leave the house, with the two letters safe in my pocket.

On my way to the village, I prepared myself for the possibility of meeting Sir Percival. As long as I had him to deal with alone, I felt certain of not losing my presence of mind. Any woman who is sure of her own wits, is a match, at any time, for a man who is not sure of his own temper. I had no such fear of Sir Percival as I had of the Count. Instead of fluttering, it had composed me, to hear of the errand on which he had gone out. While the tracing of Anne Catherick was the great anxiety that occupied him, Laura and I might hope for some cessation of any active persecution at his hands. For our sakes now, as well as for hers, I hoped and prayed fervently that she might still escape him.

I walked on as briskly as the heat would let me, till I reached the cross-road which led to the village; looking back, from time to time, to make sure that I was not followed by any one. Nothing was behind me, all the way, but an empty country waggon. The noise made by the lumbering wheels annoyed me; and when I found that the waggon took the road to the village, as well as myself, I stopped to let it go by, and pass out of hearing. As I looked towards it, more attentively than before, I thought I detected, at intervals, the feet of a man walking close behind it; the carter being in front, by the side of his horses. The part of the cross-road which I had just passed over was so narrow, that the waggon coming after me brushed the trees and thickets on either side; and I had to wait until it went by, before I could test the correctness of my impression. Apparently, that impression was wrong, for when the waggon

had passed me, the road behind it was quite clear.

I reached the inn without meeting Sir Percival, and without noticing anything more; and was glad to find that the landlady had received Fanny with all possible kindness. The girl had a little parlour to sit in, away from the noise of the tap-room, and a clean bed-chamber at the top of the house. She began crying again, at the sight of me; and said, poor soul, truly enough, that it was dreadful to feel herself turned out into the world, as if she had committed some unpardonable fault, when no blame could be laid at her door by anybody—not even by her master who had sent her away.

"Try to make the best of it, Fanny," I said. "Your mistress and I will stand your friends, and will take care that your character shall not suffer. Now, listen to me. I have very little time to spare, and I am going to put a great trust in your hands. I wish you to take care of these two letters. The one with the stamp on it you are to put into the post, when you reach London, to-morrow. The other, directed to Mr. Fairlie, you are to deliver to him yourself, as soon as you get home. Keep both the letters about you, and give them up to no one. They are of the last importance to your mistress's interests."

Fanny put the letters into the bosom of her dress. "There they shall stop, miss," she said, "till I have done what you tell me."

"Mind you are at the station in good time to-morrow morning," I continued. "And, when you see the housekeeper at Limmeridge, give her my compliments, and say that you are in my service, until Lady Glyde is able to take you back. We may meet again sooner than you think. So keep a good heart, and don't miss the seven o'clock train."

"Thank you, miss—thank you kindly. It gives one courage to hear your voice again. Please to offer my duty to my lady; and say I left all the things as tidy as I could in the time. Oh, dear! dear! who will dress her for dinner to-day? It really breaks my heart, miss, to think of it."

When I got back to the house, I had only a quarter of an hour to spare, to put myself in order for dinner, and to say two words to Laura before I went down stairs.

"The letters are in Fanny's hands," I whispered to her, at the door. "Do you mean to join us at dinner?"

"Oh, no, no—not for the world!"

"Has anything happened? Has any one disturbed you?"

"Yes—just now—Sir Percival——"

"Did he come in?"

"No: he frightened me by a thump on the door, outside. I said, 'Who's there?' 'You know,' he answered. 'Will you alter your mind, and tell me the rest? You shall! Sooner or later, I'll wring it out of you. You know where Anne Catherick is, at this moment?' 'Indeed, indeed,' I said, 'I don't.' 'You do!' he called back.

'I'll crush your obstinacy—mind that!—I'll wring it out of you!' He went away, with those words—went away, Marian, hardly five minutes ago."

He had not found her. We were safe for that night—he had not found her yet.

"You are going down stairs, Marian? Come up again in the evening."

"Yes, yes. Don't be uneasy, if I am a little late—I must be careful not to give offence by leaving them too soon."

The dinner-bell rang; and I hastened away.

Sir Percival took Madame Fosco into the dining-room; and the Count gave me his arm. He was hot and flushed, and was not dressed with his customary care and completeness. Had he, too, been out before dinner, and been late in getting back? or was he only suffering from the heat a little more severely than usual?

However this might be, he was unquestionably troubled by some secret annoyance or anxiety, which, with all his powers of deception, he was not able entirely to conceal. Through the whole of dinner, he was almost as silent as Sir Percival himself; and he, every now and then, looked at his wife with an expression of furtive uneasiness, which was quite new in my experience of him. The one social obligation which he seemed to be self-possessed enough to perform as carefully as ever, was the obligation of being persistently civil and attentive to me. What vile object he has in view, I cannot still discover; but, be the design what it may, invariable politeness towards myself, invariable humility towards Laura, and invariable suppression (at any cost) of Sir Percival's clumsy violence, have been the means he has resolutely and impenetrably used to get to his end, ever since he set foot in this house. I suspected it, when he first interfered in our favour, on the day when the deed was produced in the library, and I feel certain of it, now.

When Madame Fosco and I rose to leave the table, the Count rose also to accompany us back to the drawing-room.

"What are you going away for?" asked Sir Percival—"I mean *you*, Fosco."

"I am going away, because I have had dinner enough, and wine enough," answered the Count. "Be so kind, Percival, as to make allowances for my foreign habit of going out with the ladies, as well as coming in with them."

"Nonsense! Another glass of claret won't hurt you. Sit down again like an Englishman. I want half an hour's quiet talk with you over our wine."

"A quiet talk, Percival, with all my heart, but not now, and not over the wine. Later in the evening, if you please—later in the evening."

"Civil!" said Sir Percival, savagely. "Civil behaviour, upon my soul, to a man in his own house!"

I had more than once seen him look at the Count uneasily during dinner-time, and had observed that the Count carefully abstained from looking at him in return. This circumstance,

coupled with the host's anxiety for a little quiet talk over the wine and the guest's obstinate resolution not to sit down again at the table, revived in my memory the request which Sir Percival had vainly addressed to his friend, earlier in the day, to come out of the library and speak to him. The Count had deferred granting that private interview, when it was first asked for in the afternoon, and had again deferred granting it, when it was a second time asked for at the dinner-table. Whatever the coming subject of discussion between them might be, it was clearly an important subject in Sir Percival's estimation—and perhaps (judging from his evident reluctance to approach it), a dangerous subject as well, in the estimation of the Count.

These considerations occurred to me while we were passing from the dining-room to the drawing-room. Sir Percival's angry commentary on his friend's desertion of him had not produced the slightest effect. The Count obstinately accompanied us to the tea-table—waited a minute or two in the room—then went out into the hall and returned with the post-bag in his hands. It was then eight o'clock—the hour at which the letters were always despatched from Blackwater Park.

"Have you any letter for the post, Miss Halcombe?" he asked, approaching me, with the bag.

I saw Madame Fosco, who was making the tea, pause, with the sugar-tongs in her hand, to listen for my answer.

"No, Count, thank you. No letters today."

He gave the bag to the servant, who was then in the room; sat down at the piano; and played the air of the lively Neapolitan street-song, "*La mia Carolina*," twice over. His wife, who was usually the most deliberate of women in all her movements, made the tea as quickly as I could have made it myself—finished her own cup in two minutes—and quietly glided out of the room.

I rose to follow her example—partly because I suspected her of attempting some treachery up-stairs with Laura; partly, because I was resolved not to remain alone in the same room with her husband.

Before I could get to the door, the Count stopped me, by a request for a cup of tea. I gave him the cup of tea; and tried a second time to get away. He stopped me again—this time, by going back to the piano, and suddenly appealing to me on a musical question in which he declared that the honour of his country was concerned.

I vainly pleaded my own total ignorance of music, and total want of taste in that direction. He only appealed to me again with a vehemence which set all further protest on my part at defiance. "The English and the Germans (he indignantly declared) were always reviling the Italians for their inability to cultivate the higher kinds of music. We were perpetually talking of our Oratorios; and they were perpetually talking of their Symphonies. Did

we forget and did they forget his immortal friend and countryman, Rossini? What was '*Moses in Egypt*,' but a sublime oratorio, which was acted on the stage, instead of being coldly sung in a concert-room? What was the overture to *Guillaume Tell*, but a symphony under another name? Had I heard *Moses in Egypt*? Would I listen to this, and this, and this, and say if anything more sublimely sacred and grand had ever been composed by mortal man?"—And, without waiting for a word of assent or dissent on my part, looking me hard in the face all the time, he began thundering on the piano, and singing to it with loud and lofty enthusiasm; only interrupting himself, at intervals, to announce to me fiercely the titles of the different pieces of music: "*Chorus of Egyptians, in the Plague of Darkness, Miss Halcombe!*"—"Recitativo of *Moses, with the tables of the Law.*"—"Prayer of Israelites, at the passage of the Red Sea. Aha! Aha! Is that sacred? is that sublime?" The piano trembled under his powerful hands; and the teacups on the table rattled, as his big bass voice thundered out the notes, and his heavy foot beat time on the floor.

There was something horrible—something fierce and devilish, in the outburst of his delight at his own singing and playing, and in the triumph with which he watched its effect upon me, as I shrank nearer and nearer to the door. I was released, at last, not by my own efforts, but by Sir Percival's interposition. He opened the dining-room door, and called out angrily to know what "that infernal noise" meant. The Count instantly got up from the piano. "Ah! if Percival is coming," he said, "harmony and melody are both at an end. The Muse of Music, Miss Halcombe, deserts us in dismay; and I, the fat old minstrel, exhale the rest of my enthusiasm in the open air!" He stalked out into the verandah, put his hands in his pockets, and resumed the "*recitativo of Moses*," sotto voce, in the garden.

I heard Sir Percival call after him, from the dining-room window. But he took no notice: he seemed determined not to hear. That long-deferred quiet talk between them was still to be put off, was still to wait for the Count's absolute will and pleasure.

He had detained me in the drawing-room nearly half an hour from the time when his wife left us. Where had she been, and what had she been doing in that interval?

I went up-stairs to ascertain, but I made no discoveries; and when I questioned Laura, I found that she had not heard anything. Nobody had disturbed her—no faint rustling of the silk dress had been audible, either in the ante-room or in the passage.

It was, then, twenty minutes to nine. After going to my room to get my journal, I returned, and sat with Laura; sometimes writing, sometimes stopping to talk with her. Nobody came near us, and nothing happened. We remained together till ten o'clock. I then rose; said my last cheering words; and wished her good night.

She locked her door again, after we had arranged that I should come in and see her the first thing in the morning.

I had a few sentences more to add to my diary, before going to bed myself; and, as I went down again to the drawing-room, after leaving Laura, for the last time that weary day, I resolved merely to show myself there, to make my excuses, and then to retire an hour earlier than usual, for the night.

Sir Percival, and the Count and his wife, were sitting together. Sir Percival was yawning in an easy-chair; the Count was reading; Madame Fosco was fanning herself. Strange to say, *her* face was flushed, now. She, who never suffered from the heat, was most undoubtedly suffering from it to-night.

"I am afraid, Countess, you are not quite so well as usual?" I said.

"The very remark I was about to make to you," she replied. "You are looking pale, my dear."

My dear! It was the first time she had ever addressed me with that familiarity! There was an insolent smile, too, on her face when she said the words.

"I am suffering from one of my bad headaches," I answered, coldly.

"Ah, indeed? Want of exercise, I suppose? A walk before dinner would have been just the thing for you." She referred to the "walk" with a strange emphasis. Had she seen me go out? No matter if she had. The letters were safe, now, in Fanny's hands.

"Come, and have a smoke, Fosco," said Sir Percival, rising, with another uneasy look at his friend.

"With pleasure, Percival, when the ladies have gone to bed," replied the Count.

"Excuse me, Countess, if I set you the example of retiring," I said. "The only remedy for such a headache as mine is going to bed."

I took my leave. There was the same insolent smile on the woman's face when I shook hands with her. Sir Percival paid no attention to me. He was looking impatiently at Madame Fosco, who showed no signs of leaving the room with me. The Count smiled to himself behind his book. There was yet another delay to that quiet talk with Sir Percival—and the Countess was the impediment, this time.

Once safely shut into my own room, I opened these pages, and prepared to go on with that part of the day's record which was still left to write.

For ten minutes or more, I sat idle, with the pen in my hand, thinking over the events of the last twelve hours. When I at last addressed myself to my task, I found a difficulty in proceeding with it which I had never experienced before. In spite of my efforts to fix my thoughts on the matter in hand, they wandered away, with the strangest persistency, in the one direction of Sir Percival and the Count; and all the interest which I tried to concentrate on my journal, centred, in-

stead, on that private interview between them, which had been put off all through the day, and which was now to take place in the silence and solitude of the night.

In this perverse state of my mind, the recollection of what had passed since the morning would not come back to me; and there was no resource but to close my journal and to get away from it for a little while.

I opened the door which led from my bedroom into my sitting-room, and, having passed through, pulled it to again, to prevent any accident, in case of draught, with the candle left on the dressing-table. My sitting-room window was wide open; and I leaned out, listlessly, to look at the night.

It was dark and quiet. Neither moon nor stars were visible. There was a smell like rain in the still, heavy air; and I put my hand out of window. No. The rain was only threatening; it had not come yet.

MORE VERY COMMON LAW.

BEFORE entering upon a further consideration of Mr. Blank's responsibility for the acts of his servants, let us mention one other sufficient cause for dismissal. Should Mr. Blank find his servant, after trial, to be utterly incompetent to perform the duties which he has undertaken, the law will allow Mr. Blank to dismiss him. As Lord Ellenborough has said, "the master is not bound to keep him (the incompetent domestic) on, as a burdensome and useless servant to the end of the year."

Mr. Justice Willes has laid down the law so clearly upon this point, that we have no hesitation in introducing the "ipsissima verba" of that learned judge into our pages. "When a skilled labourer, artisan, or artist, is employed, there is, on his part, an implied warranty that he is of skill reasonably competent to the task he undertakes—'*spondes peritiam artis*.' Thus, if an apothecary, a watchmaker, an attorney, be employed for reward, they each impliedly undertake to possess and exercise reasonable skill in their respective arts. The public profession of an art is a representation and undertaking to all the world that the professor possesses the requisite ability and skill. An express promise or express representation in the particular case is not necessary. It may be that if there is no general and no particular representation of ability and skill, the workman undertakes no responsibility. If a gentleman, for example, should employ a man that is known to have never done anything but sweep a擦ing, to clean or mend his watch, the employer would probably be held to have incurred all risk himself. The next question is this: supposing that, when the skill and competency of the party employed are tested by the employment, he is found to be utterly incompetent, is the employer bound nevertheless to go on employing him to the end of the term for which he is engaged, notwithstanding his incompetency? It seems very unreasonable that an employer should be

compelled to go on employing a man who, having represented himself to be competent, turns out to be incompetent. An engineer is retained by a railway company to drive an express train for a year, and is found to be utterly unskilful or incompetent to drive or regulate the locomotive: are the railway company still bound, under pain of an action, to entrust the lives of thousands, to his dangerous and demonstrated incapacity? A clerk is retained for a year to keep a merchant's books, and it turns out that he is ignorant not only of book-keeping but of arithmetic: is the merchant bound to continue him in his employment? Misconduct in a servant is, according to every day's experience, a justification of a discharge. The failure to afford the requisite skill expressly or impliedly promised, is a breach of legal duty, and, therefore, misconduct."

"It appears to us," added Mr. Justice Willes, in his judgment, "that there is no material difference between a servant who will not, and a servant who can not, perform the duties for which he was hired."

To go back to the responsibility of Mr. Blank for the acts of his servants. "If a servant," said Lord Cranworth, not very long ago, in the House of Lords, "driving his master's carriage along the highway, carelessly runs over a bystander," another reason why Mr. Blank should be careful in the selection of his coachman, "or if a gamekeeper employed to kill game carelessly fire at a hare so as to shoot a person passing on the ground, or if a workman employed by a builder in building a house negligently throw a brick or stone from the scaffold and so hurt a passer-by, the person injured has a right to treat the wrongful act as the act of the master."

So, Mr. Blank is responsible for damage caused by his servant's carelessness whilst that servant is occupied in doing his business.

If Leggings, the keeper, however, choose to attend a pigeon-shooting for his own private amusement, and be so unfortunate as to put an ounce and a half of shot through a neighbouring conservatory, Mr. Blank will not be responsible for that act of his servant. Moreover, should Leggings (whom we will assume to be an excellent keeper and a crack shot) have the misfortune to damage the under-keeper whilst both are engaged in killing their master's rabbits, no legal penalties will attach to Mr. Blank, although he is the master: unless it can be shown that Leggings is incompetent to fulfil the duties of a gamekeeper, and is not by any means a crack shot.

The responsibility of a master, in fact, does not extend to any damage which one servant may receive from another while both are engaged in a common employment: provided the master take proper precaution to employ servants who understand their work.

Let us take a case recently decided in the House of Lords, and from which we have already quoted.

In that instance, a miner was killed, through

the carelessness of the engine-man, who neglected to stop the engine when the cage, in which the miner was seated, had reached the mouth of the pit. The relatives of the unfortunate man brought an action against the owners of the colliery, but (the question having been referred to the highest tribunal) it was held that they were not liable. Among other reasons adduced, Lord Cranworth said: "When the workman contracts to do work of any particular sort, he knows, or ought to know, to what risks he is exposing himself; he knows, if such be the nature of the risk, that want of care on the part of a fellow-workman may be injurious or fatal to him—that against such want of care his employer cannot by any means protect him."

Let us try a change of subject: say, "shopping." The legal peculiarities attached to this operation are not numerous, but the few which strike us as of consequence shall be faithfully stated.

If a person purchase goods of a greater value than ten pounds, the law requires the bargain to be ratified by a note in writing, signed by the purchaser: "except," as the books have it, "the buyer shall accept part of the goods so sold, and actually receive the same, or give something in earnest to bind the bargain, or in part payment."

As an illustration: Mr. Blank may purchase several articles at one time, which, though individually of less value than ten pounds, amount, in the whole, to more than that sum, may take them home with him, may talk the matter over with Mrs. B, may repent of his bargain, and return the goods to the disappointed shopkeeper, if there have been no written ratification of the transaction.

Thus, a man bought various articles at a linen-draper's, we find from the reports, each of less value than ten pounds, but amounting, in the whole, to seventy pounds. Some of the articles were measured in his presence, others marked by him with a pencil, and assistance rendered by him in cutting other parts of the goods purchased from larger pieces. The whole seventy pounds' worth of haberdashery having been sent to his house, he discovered that the shopkeeper would not allow him more than five per cent discount for cash, and, upon this, returned the whole of them. The courts decided that he was quite justified in so doing, there having been no legal acceptance.

Moreover, if any one of a number of articles purchased by Mr. Blank from a tradesman should prove to be of a different character from that promised by the shopkeeper, he may return the whole: always provided, however, that he do so within a reasonable time.

A very exorbitant individual once upon a time bought a chandelier, kept it for six months, and then returned it, saying that it was too small for his room; but the courts were not going to sanction so unreasonable a proceeding as that, and requested the gentleman to make the best of his bargain.

Again: if Mr. Blank gives an order, which is not executed according to his instructions, he may return all, or a part of, the articles. Take the case of a gentleman who ordered two dozen of port, and a like quantity of sherry, but to whom the enterprising merchant sent four dozen of each. Having tasted a bottle of the sherry, the gentleman found it was not of the quality he expected, and, upon this, sent back the remainder of the sherry, but retained one dozen of the port. You are liable to pay—said the legal authorities before whom the question whether the gentleman was to pay for the whole of the wine sent, or not, was subsequently discussed—for the wine which you retained, and for no more.

It is a different matter, however, if Mr. Blank purchase a specific article under a warranty and has once accepted it. Should he be disappointed with his purchase under these circumstances, he cannot return the article, but, having paid for it, may bring an action for the damage which he has sustained.

Thus (to quote an instance from that most prolific source of litigation, "horse-dealing"), a man bought a horse warranted sound, kept him for one day, sold him the next, and repurchased him the day following: discovering at last that the animal was unsound. Of course, he immediately brought an action against the dealer who had originally warranted the horse, but he could not compel that disingenuous individual to take back the unsound animal. It was said by Lord Tenterden, however, in the course of this case, that "though a person who buys a specific article delivered with a warranty may not have a right to return it, the same does not apply to executory contracts when an article, for instance, is ordered from a manufacturer who contracts that it is of a certain quality"—the wine manufacturer above mentioned no doubt professed that his sherry was a very high flavoured Amon-tillado—"or fit for a certain purpose, and the article is never completely accepted by the person ordering it. In this and similar cases the latter may return it as soon as he discovers the defect, provided he has done nothing more in the mean time than give the article a fair trial."

To carry the doctrine a step further: we find it stated by Mr. Justice Erskine, that, "when a party undertakes to supply an article for a particular purpose, he warrants that it shall be fit and proper for such purpose." And this applies, as will be seen from the following case, even where the person supplying the article is not the actual manufacturer:

A wine-merchant in want of a crane rope sent his clerk to a ropemaker, to purchase one. On the following day, the foreman of the ropemaker called at the merchant's office, and, after inquiring what description of rope was required, and taking dimensions, stated that it would be necessary to manufacture a new rope. The rope having been made accordingly, was sent to the wine-merchant, but broke in the using: causing, at the same time, the loss of a pipe of wine. This led to an action against the man from whom

the rope was purchased. In defence, it was stated that, though calling himself a ropemaker, the person who furnished the rope had not, in fact, actually manufactured it, but had sent it to a ropemaker to be made; that, consequently, there was no implied warranty, and, therefore, he (the seller of the rope) was not liable. This would not do. "Here the defendant," said Mr. Justice Erskine, "did not make the rope, but he selected a person to make it, and he had an opportunity of informing him of the purpose for which the article was wanted. If he did not do so, it was his own fault. Having undertaken to supply a rope for the plaintiff's crane, he is clearly liable to the action, the jury having found that it was not a rope fit for the purpose."

Should the purchaser, however, select any particular article himself, he cannot inflict any legal penalty upon the seller, if it turn out unfit for the purpose for which it was purchased: even though the tradesman knew at the time of sale that it was unfit. The skill and judgment of the vendor, in that case, are not relied on, and there is, by consequence, no implied warranty.

"If a man goes into the stable of a horse-dealer," said Mr. Baron Parke, "and says, 'Send me that bay horse that stands there in the third stall, to draw my carriage,' then the article wanted is defined and ascertained, and the horse-dealer does all he need do, if he sends the horse, whether he will draw the carriage or no."

So, if Mrs. Blank go into a shop and purchase ribbons, asking the shopkeeper, in the first instance, "Are these colours fast?" and if Mrs. Blank be assured that "they are fast," whereas they turn out to be wretchedly fleeting, she, or Mr. Blank on her behalf, will have a remedy against the shopkeeper.

On the other hand, let us suppose that happy couple to be sauntering down Regent-street. Mrs. B is attracted by a lovely bonnet, and, directing Mr. B's attention to it, explains to him that it is mauve—that mauve is a new colour which never fades. Upon the strength of this announcement, and without making further inquiry of the shopkeeper, Mr. B, like an exemplary British husband, purchases the bonnet, which turns out to be a very chameleon for variation of colour. In this case, Mrs. B must wear the bonnet, and make the best of it.

Another important point in shopping law is worth mentioning. If Mr. Blank should give an order for goods which are actually being manufactured at the time, he does not acquire any property in the specific goods, even though he pay for them beforehand. As Mr. Justice Heath has said, "A tradesman often finishes goods which he is making in pursuance of an order given by one person, and sells them to another. If the first customer has other goods made for him within the stipulated time, he has no right to complain."

There are exceptions to this rule. If Mr. Blank were to give his tailor cloth to make him

a coat, then, as the learned judge above quoted has said, "the party who does the work has no right to appropriate the produce of his labour, and your material, to another person." These points are important, for this reason: supposing the workman were to become bankrupt before the goods which Mr. Blank had ordered were finished, then would arise a question of property. If the property in the goods had not passed to him, and he had, unfortunately, paid for them, the assignees would take the goods.

Lastly, there is a maxim to be found in the books which Mr. Blank will do well to remember. Freely translated, it may be rendered, "Purchaser, look out!" In the Latin, it is written, "Caveat emptor." Its meaning is this: unless the seller of any goods "expressly warrants them to be sound and good," or unless he "knew them to be otherwise, and hath used any art to disguise them," the purchaser must make the best of his bargain. Whether "the buyer has paid such a price as is usually given for a sound commodity, does not affect the question." The law simply says in such a case, "Caveat emptor!"

WRITTEN IN DUST.

I SAT one morning sadly,
Upon the ocean's strand;
And with my staff I figured
A heart, deep in the sand.

My thoughts were straying wildly
O'er years long past and gone,
I marked not that the billows
Were madly rushing on.

One crested wave came foaming,
And swept the heart away;
No trace was left remaining,
Nought but the watery spray.

My own sad fate I read there,
And hastened to depart;
My bitter tears fast streaming
To think of that lost heart.

THE UNCOMMERCIAL TRAVELLER.

I GOT into the travelling chariot—it was of German make, roomy, heavy, and unvarnished—I got into the travelling chariot, pulled up the steps after me, shut myself in with a smart bang of the door, and gave the word "Go on!"

Immediately, all that W. and S.W. division of London began to slide away at a pace so lively, that I was over the river, and past the Old Kent-road, and out on Blackheath, and even ascending Shooter's Hill, before I had had time to look about me in the carriage, like a collected traveller.

I had two ample Imperials on the roof, other fitted storage for luggage in front, and other up behind; I had a net for books overhead, great pockets to all the windows, a leathern pouch or two hung up for odds and ends, and a reading-lamp fixed in the back of the chariot, in case I should be benighted. I was amply provided in all respects, and had no idea where I

was going (which was delightful), except that I was going abroad.

So smooth was the old high road, and so fresh were the horses, and so fast went I, that it was midway between Gravesend and Rochester, and the widening river was bearing the ships, white-sailed or black-smoked, out to sea, when I noticed by the wayside a very queer small boy.

"Halloa!" said I, to the very queer small boy, "where do you live?"

"At Chatham," says he.

"What do you do there?" says I.

"I go to school," says he.

I took him up in a moment, and we went on. Presently, the very queer small boy said, "This is Gadshill we are coming to, where Falstaff went out to rob those travellers, and ran away."

"You know something about Falstaff, eh?" said I.

"All about him," said the very queer small boy.

"I am old (I am nine), and I read all sorts of books. But *do* let us stop at the top of the hill, and look at the house there, if you please!"

"You admire that house?" said I.

"Bless you, sir," said the very queer small boy, "when I was not more than half as old as nine, it used to be a treat for me to be brought to look at it. And now, I am nine, I come by myself to look at it. And ever since I can recollect, my father, seeing me so fond of it, has often said to me, 'If you were to be very persevering and were to work hard, you might some day come to live in it.' Though that's impossible!" said the very queer small boy, drawing a low breath, and now staring at the house out of window with all his might.

I was rather amazed to be told this by the very queer small boy; for that house happens to be *my* house, and I have reason to believe that what he said was true.

Well! I made no halt there, and I soon dropped the very queer small boy and went on. Over the road where the old Romans used to march, over the road where the old Canterbury pilgrims used to go, over the road where the travelling trains of the old imperious priests and princes used to jingle on horseback between the continent and this Island through the mud and water, over the road where Shakespeare hummed to himself, "Blow, blow, thou winter wind," as he sat in the saddle at the gate of the inn yard noticing the carriers; all among the cherry orchards, apple orchards, corn-fields, and hop-gardens; so went I, by Canterbury to Dover. There, the sea was tumbling in, with deep sounds, after dark, and the revolving French light on Cape Grinez was seen regularly bursting out and becoming obscured, as if the head of a gigantic light-keeper in an anxious state of mind were interposed every half minute, to look how it was burning.

Early in the morning I was on the deck of the steam-packet, and we were aiming at the bar in the usual intolerable manner, and the bar was aiming at us in the usual intolerable manner, and the bar got by far the best of it, and we got

by far the worst—all in the usual intolerable manner.

But, when I was clear of the Custom House on the other side, and when I began to make the dust fly on the thirsty French roads, and when the twigsome trees by the wayside (which, I suppose, never will grow leafy, for they never did) guarded here and there a dusty soldier, or field labourer, baking on a heap of broken stones, sound asleep in a fiction of shade, I began to recover my travelling spirits. Coming upon the breaker of the broken stones, in a hard, hot, shining hat, on which the sun played at a distance as on a burning-glass, I felt that now, indeed, I was in the dear old France of my affections. I should have known it, without the well-remembered bottle of rough ordinary wine, the cold roast fowl, the loaf, and the pinch of salt, on which I lunched with unspeakable satisfaction, from one of the stuffed pockets of the chariot.

I must have fallen asleep after lunch, for when a bright face looked in at the window, I started, and said:

"Good God, Louis, I dreamed you were dead!"

My cheerful servant laughed, and answered:

"Me? Not at all, sir."

"How glad I am to wake! What are we doing, Louis?"

"We go to take relay of horses. Will you walk up the hill?"

"Certainly."

Welcome the old French hill, with the old French lunatic (not in the most distant degree related to Sterne's Maria) living in a thatched dog-kennel half way up, and flying out with his crutch and his big head and extended nightcap, to be beforehand with the old men and women exhibiting crippled children, and with the children exhibiting old men and women, ugly and blind, who always seemed by resurrectionary process to be recalled out of the elements for the sudden peopling of the solitude!

"It is well," said I, scattering among them what small coin I had; "here comes Louis, and I am quite roused from my nap."

We journeyed on again, and I welcomed every new assurance that France stood where I had left it. There were the posting-houses, with their archways, dirty stable-yards, and clean post-masters' wives, bright women of business, looking on at the putting-to of the horses; there were the postilions counting what money they got, into their hats, and never making enough of it; there were the standard population of grey horses of Flanders descent, invariably biting one another when they got a chance; there were the fleecy sheepskins, looped on over their uniforms by the postilions, like bibbed aprons, when it blew and rained; there were their jack-boots, and their cracking whips; there were the cathedrals that I got out to see, as under some cruel bondage, in no wise desiring to see them; there were the little towns that appeared to have no reason

for being towns, since most of their houses were to let and nobody could be induced to look at them, except the people who couldn't let them and had nothing else to do but look at them all day. I lay a night upon the road and enjoyed delectable cookery of potatoes, and some other sensible things, adoption of which at home would inevitably be shown to be fraught with ruin, somehow or other, to that rickety national blessing, the British farmer; and at last I was rattled, like a single pill in a box, over leagues of stones, until—madly cracking, plunging, and flourishing two grey tails about—I made my triumphant entry into Paris.

At Paris, I took an upper apartment for a few days in one of the hotels of the Rue de Rivoli: my front windows looking into the garden of the Tuileries (where the principal difference between the nursemaids and the flowers seemed to be that the former were locomotive, and the latter not): my back windows looking at all the other back windows in the hotel, and deep down into a paved yard, where my German chariot had retired under a tight-fitting archway, to all appearance, for life, and where bells rang all day without anybody's minding them but certain chamberlains with feather brooms and green baize caps, who here and there leaned out of some high window placidly looking down, and where neat waiters with trays on their left shoulders passed and repassed from morning to night.

Whenever I am at Paris, I am dragged by invisible force into the Morgue. I never want to go there, but am always pulled there. One Christmas Day, when I would rather have been anywhere else, I was attracted in, to see an old grey man lying all alone on his cold bed, with a tap of water turned on over his grey hair, and running drip, drip, drip, down his wretched face until it got to the corner of his mouth, where it took a turn and made him look sly. One New Year's Morning (by the same token, the sun was shining outside, and there was a mountebank balancing a feather on his nose, within a yard of the gate), I was pulled in again, to look at a flaxen-haired boy of eighteen with a heart hanging on his breast—"from his mother," was engraven on it—who had come into the net across the river, with a bullet-wound in his fair forehead and his hands cut with a knife, but whence or how was a blank mystery. This time, I was forced into the same dread place, to see a large dark man whose disfigurement by water was in a frightful manner, comic, and whose expression was that of a prize-fighter who had closed his eyelids under a heavy blow, but was going immediately to open them, shake his head, and "come up smiling." O what this large dark man cost me in that bright city!

It was very hot weather, and he was none the better for that, and I was much the worse. Indeed, a very neat and pleasant little woman with the key of her lodging on her forefinger, who had been showing him to her little girl while she and the child ate sweetmeats, ob-

served monsieur looking poorly as we came out together, and asked monsieur, with her wondering little eyebrows prettily raised, if there were anything the matter? Faintly replying in the negative, monsieur crossed the road to a wine-shop, got some brandy, and resolved to freshen himself with a dip in the great floating bath on the river.

The bath was crowded in the usual airy manner, by a male population in striped drawers of various gay colours, who walked up and down arm in arm, drank coffee, smoked cigars, sat at little tables, conversed politely with the damsels who dispensed the towels, and every now and then pitched themselves into the river head foremost, and came out again to repeat this social routine. I made haste to participate in the water part of the entertainments, and was in the full enjoyment of a delightful bath, when all in a moment I was seized by an unreasonable idea that the large dark body was floating straight at me.

I was out of the river, and dressing instantly. In the shock I had taken some water into my mouth, and it turned me sick, for I fancied that the contamination of the creature was in it. I had got back to my cool darkened room in the hotel, and was lying on a sofa there, before I began to reason with myself.

Of course, I knew perfectly well that the large dark creature was stone dead, and that I should no more come upon him out of the place where I had seen him dead, than I should come upon the cathedral of Notre-Dame in an entirely new situation. What troubled me was the picture of the creature; and that had so curiously and strongly painted itself upon my brain, that I could not get rid of it until it was worn out.

I noticed the peculiarities of this possession, while it was a real discomfort to me. That very day, at dinner, some morsel on my plate looked like a piece of him, and I was glad to get up and go out. Later in the evening, I was walking along the Rue St. Honoré, when I saw a bill at a public room there, announcing small-sword exercise, broad-sword exercise, wrestling, and other such feats. I went in, and, some of the sword play being very skilful, remained. A specimen of our own national sport, The British Boaxe, was announced to be given at the close of the evening. In an evil hour, I determined to wait for this Boaxe, as became a Briton. It was a clumsy specimen (executed by two English grooms out of place), but, one of the combatants, receiving a straight right-hander with the glove between his eyes, did exactly what the large dark creature in the Morgue had seemed going to do—and finished me for that night.

There was a rather sickly smell (not at all an unusual fragrance in Paris) in the little anteroom of my apartment at the hotel. The large dark creature in the Morgue was by no direct experience associated with my sense of smell, because, when I came to the knowledge of him, he lay behind a wall of thick plate-glass, as good

as a wall of steel or marble for that matter. Yet the whiff of the room never failed to reproduce him. What was more curious was the capriciousness with which his portrait seemed to light itself up in my mind, elsewhere; I might be walking in the Palais Royal, lazily enjoying the shop windows, and might be regaling myself with one of the ready-made clothes shops that are set out there. My eyes, wandering over impossible-waisted dressing-gowns and luminous waistcoats, would fall upon the master, or the shopman, or even the very dummy at the door, and would suggest to me, "Something like him!"—and instantly I was sickened again.

This would happen at the theatre, in the same manner. Often, it would happen in the street, when I certainly was not looking for the likeness, and when probably there was no likeness there. It was not because the creature was dead that I was so haunted, because I know that I might have been (and I know it because I have been) equally attended by the image of a living aversion. This lasted about a week. The picture did not fade by degrees, in the sense that it became a whit less forcible and distinct, but in the sense that it obtruded itself less and less frequently. The experience may be worth considering by some who have the care of children. It would be difficult to overstate the intensity and accuracy of an intelligent child's observation. At that impressive time of life, it must sometimes produce a fixed impression. If the fixed impression be of an object terrible to the child, it will be (for want of reasoning upon) inseparable from great fear. Force the child at such a time, be Spartan with it, send it into the dark against its will, leave it in a lonely bedroom against its will, and you had better murder it.

On a bright morning I rattled away from Paris, in the German chariot, and left the large dark creature behind me for good. I ought to confess, though, that I had been drawn back to the Morgue, after he was put under ground, to look at his clothes, and that I found them frightfully like him—particularly his boots. However, I rattled away for Switzerland, looking forward and not backward, and so we parted company.

Welcome again, the long long spell of France, with the queer country inns, full of vases of flowers and clocks, in the dull little towns, and with the little population not at all dull on the little Boulevard in the evening, under the little trees! Welcome Monsieur the Curé walking alone in the early morning a short way out of the town, reading that eternal *Breviary* of yours, which surely might be almost read, without book, by this time? Welcome Monsieur the Curé, later in the day, jolting through the highway dust (as if you had already ascended to the cloudy region), in a very big-headed cabriolet, with the dried mud of a dozen winters on it. Welcome again Monsieur the Curé, as we exchange salutations: you, straightening your back to look at the German chariot, while picking in your little village garden a vegetable or two for

the day's soup: I, looking out of the German chariot window in that delicious traveller's-trance which knows no cares, no yesterdays, no to-morrows, nothing but the passing objects and the passing scents and sounds! And so I came, in due course of delight, to Strasbourg, where I passed a wet Sunday evening at a window, while an idle trifle of a vaudeville was played for me at the opposite house.

How such a large house came to have only three people living in it, was its own affair. There were at least a score of windows in its high roof alone; how many in its grotesque front, I soon gave up counting. The owner was a shopkeeper, by name Straudenheim; by trade—I couldn't make out what by trade, for he had forborne to write that up, and his shop was shut.

At first, as I looked at Straudenheim's through the steadily falling rain, I set him up in business in the goose-liver line. But, inspection of Straudenheim, who became visible at a window on the second floor, convinced me that there was something more precious than liver in the case. He wore a black velvet skull-cap, and looked usurious and rich. A large-lipped, pear-nosed old man, with white hair, and keen eyes, though near-sighted. He was writing at a desk, was Straudenheim, and ever and again left off writing, put his pen in his mouth, and went through actions with his right hand, like a man steadying piles of cash. Five-franc pieces, Straudenheim, or golden Napoleons? A jeweller, Straudenheim, a dealer in money, a diamond merchant, or what?

Below Straudenheim, at a window on the first floor, sat his housekeeper—far from young, but of a comely presence, suggestive of a well-matured foot and ankle. She was cheerily dressed, had a fan in her hand, and wore large gold earrings and a large gold cross. She would have been out holiday-making (as I settled it) but for the pestilent rain. Strasbourg had given up holiday-making for that once, as a bad job, because the rain was jerking in gushes out of the old roof-spouts, and running in a brook down the middle of the street. The housekeeper, her arms folded on her bosom and her fan tapping her chin, was bright and smiling at her open window, but otherwise Straudenheim's house front was very dreary. The housekeeper's was the only open window in it; Straudenheim kept himself close, though it was a sultry evening when air is pleasant, and though the rain had brought into the town that vague refreshing smell of grass which rain does bring in the summer-time.

The dim appearance of a man at Straudenheim's shoulder, inspired me with a misgiving that somebody had come to murder that flourishing merchant for the wealth with which I had handsomely endowed him: the rather, as it was an excited man, lean and long of figure, and evidently stealthy of foot. But, he conferred with Straudenheim instead of doing him a mortal injury, and then they both softly opened the

other window of that room—which was immediately over the housekeeper's—and tried to see her by looking down. And my opinion of Straudenheim was much lowered when I saw that eminent citizen spit out of window, clearly with the hope of spitting on the housekeeper.

The unconscious housekeeper fanned herself, tossed her head, and laughed. Though unconscious of Straudenheim, she was conscious of somebody else—of me?—there was nobody else.

After leaning so far out of window, that I confidently expected to see their heels tilt up, Straudenheim and the lean man drew their heads in and shut the window. Presently, the house door secretly opened, and they slowly and spitefully crept forth into the pouring rain. They were coming over to me (I thought) to demand satisfaction for my looking at the housekeeper, when they plunged into a recess in the architecture under my window, and dragged out the puniest of little soldiers begirt with the most innocent of little swords. The tall glazed head-dress of this warrior, Straudenheim instantly knocked off, and out of it fell two sugar-sticks, and three or four large lumps of sugar.

The warrior made no effort to recover his property or to pick up his shako, but looked with an expression of attention at Straudenheim when he kicked him five times, and also at the lean man when he kicked him five times, and again at Straudenheim when he tore the breast of his (the warrior's) little coat open, and shook all his ten fingers in his face, as if they were ten thousand. When these outrages had been committed, Straudenheim and his man went into the house again and barred the door. A wonderful circumstance was, that the housekeeper who saw it all (and who could have taken six such warriors to her buxom bosom at once), only fanned herself and laughed as she had laughed before, and seemed to have no opinion about it, one way or other.

But, the chief effect of the drama was the remarkable vengeance taken by the little warrior. Left alone in the rain, he picked up his shako; put it on, all wet and dirty as it was; retired into a court, of which Straudenheim's house formed the corner; wheeled about; and bringing his two forefingers close to the top of his nose, rubbed them over one another, crosswise, in derision, defiance, and contempt of Straudenheim. Although Straudenheim could not possibly be supposed to be conscious of this strange proceeding, it so inflated and comforted the little warrior's soul, that twice he went away, and twice came back into the court to repeat it, as though it must goad his enemy to madness. Not only that, but he afterwards came back with two other small warriors, and they all three did it together. Not only that—as I live to tell the tale!—but just as it was falling quite dark, the three came back, bringing with them a huge, bearded Sapper, whom they moved, by recital of the original wrong,

to go through the same performance, with the same complete absence of all possible knowledge of it on the part of Straudenheim. And then they all went away, arm in arm, singing.

I went away, too, in the German chariot at sunrise, and rattled on, day after day, like one in a sweet dream; with so many clear little bells on the harness of the horses, that the nursery rhyme about Banbury Cross and the venerable lady who rode in state there, was always in my ears. And now I came into the land of wooden houses, innocent cakes, thin butter soup, and spotless little inn bedrooms with a family likeness to Dairies. And now the Swiss marksmen were for ever rifle-shooting at marks across gorges, so exceedingly near my ear, that I felt like a new Gesler in a Canton of Tells, and went in highly-deserved danger of my tyrannical life. The prizes at these shootings, were watches, smart handkerchiefs, hats, spoons, and (above all) tea-trays; and at these contests I came upon a more than usually accomplished and amiable countryman of my own, who had shot himself deaf in whole years of competition, and had won so many tea-trays that he went about the country with his carriage full of them, like a glorified Cheap-Jack.

In the mountain country into which I had now travelled, a yoke of oxen were sometimes hooked on before the post-horses, and I went lumbering up, up, up, through mist and rain, with the roar of falling water for change of music. Of a sudden, mist and rain would clear away, and I would come down into picturesque little towns with gleaming spires and odd towers; and would stroll afoot into market-places in steep winding streets, where a hundred women in bodices, sold eggs and honey, butter and fruit, and suckled their children as they sat by their clean baskets, and had such enormous goitres (or glandular swellings in the throat) that it became a science to know where the nurse ended and the child began. About this time, I deserted my German chariot for the back of a mule (in colour and consistency so very like a dusty old hair trunk I once had at school, that I half expected to see my initials in brass-headed nails on his backbone), and went up a thousand rugged ways, and looked down at a thousand woods of fir and pine, and would on the whole have preferred my mule's keeping a little nearer to the inside, and not usually travelling with a hoof or two over the precipice, though much consoled by explanation that this was to be attributed to his great sagacity, by reason of his carrying broad loads of wood at other times, and not being clear but that I myself belonged to that station of life, and required as much room as they. He brought me safely, in his own wise way, among the passes of the Alps, and here I enjoyed a dozen climates a day; being now (like Don Quixote on the back of the wooden horse) in the region of wind, now in the region of fire, and now in the region of unmelting ice and snow. Here, I passed over trembling domes of ice, beneath which the cataract was roaring; and here was received under arches of icicles, of unspeakable beauty; and here

the sweet air was so bracing and so light, that at halting-times I rolled in the snow when I saw my mule do it, thinking that he must know best. At this part of the journey we would come, at mid-day, into half an hour's thaw: when the rough mountain inn would be found on an island of deep mud in a sea of snow, while the baiting strings of mules, and the carts full of casks and bales, which had been in an Arctic condition a mile off, would steam again. By such ways and means, I would come to the cluster of chalets where I had to turn out of the track to see the waterfall; and then, uttering a howl like a young giant, on espying a traveller—in other words, something to eat—coming up the steep, the idiot lying on the wood-pile who sunned himself and nursed his goitre, would rouse the woman-guide within the hut, who would stream out hastily, throwing her child over one of her shoulders and her goitre over the other, as she came along. I slept at religious houses, and bleak refuges of many kinds, on this journey, and by the stove at night heard stories of travellers who had perished within call, in wreaths and drifts of snow. One night the stove within, and the cold outside, awakened childish associations long forgotten, and I dreamed I was in Russia—the identical serf out of a picture-book I had, before I could read it for myself—and that I was going to be knouted by a noble personage in a fur cap, boots, and earrings, who, I think, must have come out of some melodrama.

Commend me to the beautiful waters among these mountains! Though I was not of their mind: they, being inveterately bent on getting down into the level country, and I ardently desiring to linger where I was. What desperate leaps they took, what dark abysses they plunged into, what rocks they wore away, what echoes they invoked! In one part where I went, they were pressed into the service of carrying wood down, to be burnt next winter, as costly fuel, in Italy. But, their fierce savage nature was not to be easily constrained, and they fought with every limb of the wood; whirling it round and round, stripping its bark away, dashing it against pointed corners, driving it out of the course, and roaring and flying at the peasants who steered it back again from the bank with long stout poles. Alas! concurrent streams of time and water carried me down fast, and I came, on an exquisitely clear day, to the Lausanne shore of the Lake of Geneva, where I stood looking at the bright blue water, the flushed white mountains opposite, and the boats at my feet with their furled Mediterranean sails, showing like enormous magnifications of this goose-quill pen that is now in my hand.

—The sky became overcast without any notice; a wind very like the March east wind of England, blew across me; and a voice said, "How do you like it? Will it do?"

I had merely shut myself, for half a minute, in a German travelling chariot that stood for sale in the Carriage Department of the London Pantechnicon. I had a commission to buy it,

for a friend who was going abroad; and the look and manner of the chariot, as I tried the cushions and the springs, brought all these hints of travelling remembrance before me.

"It will do very well," said I, rather sorrowfully, as I got out at the other door, and shut the carriage up.

ENGLAND, LONG AND LONG AGO.

IN the days when our little island was young, she was not a beauty; she was merely grand and interesting. Unlike other belles, she began to charm the poet and novelist only at a very mature age; a strange consummation, and one which has required a wonderful series of metamorphoses, each as complete and mysterious as that which transforms the larva into the butterfly.

The mind finds it difficult to realise the idea that a country like England was once a steaming morass, covered with the rank tropical vegetation of the tree-fern groves; its awful silence only broken by the hum of the shardy beetle, the rush of the hideous flying-lizards through lofty woods of ferns and reeds, or the tramp of the giant iguanodons over the plashy wolds. Imagination, left to itself, could scarcely have indulged in so wild a flight as to picture an era when palm-trees waved in Kent and Hampshire, and the plains of Cumnor were the coral reefs of some primeval lagoon; when the tiger and hyæna lurked in the thickets of Kirkdale; when the trumpeting of the huge northern elephant was heard on the moors of Yorkshire and the downs of Brighton; when the bison fed on the plains, and the sullen river-horse and rhinoceros browsed by the Thames and the Avon.

Yet these things were. The hammer of the geologist, like the enchanter's wand, has conjured up more than one panorama of Old England, far more weird and wonderful than ever was fabled. The historian only seeks to trace back the annals of our island, to the days when it was first peopled by painted savages, living in wigwams like the Red Indian or the beaver, and hunting with the rude bow and flint-headed arrow; the geologist recalls the times when our island was the home of the dragon, the turtle, and the iguanodon.

How these dreams formed and broke; how the shoreless and stagnant oceans of the primeval world changed into clear seas and rivers; how the monotonous vegetation of kelp-weeds, and, still later, the vast forests of ferns and club-mosses, with all the uncouth actors in the sombre drama of pre-Adamite life, gave way to the beautiful flora and fauna of modern times; we will endeavour to show as succinctly and clearly as we can; first assuring any timid reader that we neither purpose to inflict a theological controversy upon him, nor to bewilder him with a scientific jargon. We cannot wonder at such a reader being terrified when told that "slaty lamina are oblique to the crystallisation;" that "diagonal lamination may be produced by sedimentary deposition;" that "in crystallisation there is something like definite

polarity;" that "cross-joints, combined with cleavage, divide rocks into rhomboidal solids." This is all right and essential in its way; this is all proper in works of reference, but it has deterred thousands from the study of science; we will therefore try if it be not possible to give a few brief sketches of past times without these deterring accompaniments.

The curtain rises upon an interminable ocean of granite, seething and glowing like molten ore, and heaving like the Atlantic in a gale; an impenetrable mist, formed by the heat expelling every drop of water from the granite ocean, its solemn stillness never stirred by a breeze, contrasting strangely with the infernal uproar beneath, overhangs the globe from pole to pole.

As the first great day wears on, the heat gradually passes out into space, and when we next look upon the scene, though the granite still seethes in every cleft and volcano, though every hill and table-land shakes and thunders as the raging flood beneath heaves and falls, and the waters which have fallen from the mists still boil like a pot, yet the fearful turmoil has greatly subsided; the granite is settling down into hills and valleys; and the Great Architect is laying the foundations of the earth in the shape of the igneous rocks.

Even before this part of the task was well completed and the seas had cooled down from boiling heat, the rivers were slowly wearing down the granite, and pouring their mud into every sea and lake, to form the first stratified rocks. Little fucoïds, progenitors of the kelp-weeds which the wretched inhabitants of the western highlands have, ever since the memory of man, gathered for their cattle and sheep, lined the iron-bound shores of these early seas; springing up feeble and few at the outset, until at last they grew so thick and rank, that beds of anthracite are found in Dumfries, composed solely of them, and flagstones are met with so full of bitumen from the same cause, that they burn more brightly than cannel coal. Sea-worms, and zoophytes, creatures like little bundles of twigs tied on a common stalk, without the sense of sight and smell, alone peopled the waters.

Now and then, a volcano would pour its lava over the mud of some inland sea, and bake it into gneiss, and, later on, when the heat had lessened more, into mica-schist, until, as the violence and frequency of these outbursts abated, the clay slates were formed. Nor was Nature even at this early date, unmindful of beauty; the same heat fed the alembic from which the garnet, the ruby, and topaz, with many priceless stones and metals, were distilled by her wondrous alchemy.

The first day is gone amidst impenetrable gloom, and with the second come the earliest creatures of prey—the first tiny freebooters of the ocean: stone lilies (Euerinites), accompanied by crabs and little creatures serrated like combs. The lily was furnished with long fingers to catch its prey, and was guarded from assault by an elaborately worked suit of armour, consisting

of at least twenty-six thousand pieces, and so constructed as to be proof at every point, and yet allow of the freest movement. Shell-fish of the oyster tribe soon appeared, and the crab had its representative—not in an animal of the commonly accepted form, but in a creature called a Trilobite, very much like an immense wood-louse, but more akin to our king-crab than most of his edible brethren. The beautifully jointed shells of this animal, exhibit the most contrivances ever yet observed for securing freedom of movement and protection at the same time. These animals, like the molluscs, could see, and perhaps hear, so that a great stride in development had already been made.

As yet we see no sign of the enormous bulk which distinguished the reptiles and mammals of a later period. Beauty there was, however, of its kind—beauty of form, if not of hue—for the stone lilies were daintily sculptured with geometrical patterns, resembling the style of the "Early English."

The second day was no longer marked by the palpable darkness which until then had shrouded everything. Still, the atmosphere was dense and torpid, like that supposed to hang round Mercury and form the dark bands on the surface of Jupiter; it was so laden with carbon, too, that it must have proved fatal to any living being. There was no land on which anything could grow, for it had first of all to be irrigated by the muddy rivers, or funneled at the bottom of the lakes; but it was nigh at hand; and, as the faint light sinks into evening, it rises from the waters, and with it the earliest traces of land, plants, and fishes.

Again the curtain rises with returning light, and reveals the laying down of the old red sandstone, now made so familiar a word by the genius of Miller, and bearing in its colour proofs of the first appearance of that mighty mineral, iron, which was in time to bring everything under the rule of man.

The flora of the first garden was lowly enough: club-mosses and ferns were well-nigh all it could boast of. Even they are sparsely scattered, and it is not till the old red sandstone is about to disappear, that a fine Irish fern and a pine-tree appear upon the stage.

The forming of this great geological production, in every country the home of the earliest land plants, appears to have been attended with an amount of violence unusual even in those stormy times. All the pomp and horrors that the volcano and earthquake could lend, preluded the appearance of regions to be tenanted by a more developed race of beings. And when it is remembered that there is a volcano at Pirænea eight miles in circumference at its crater; that Rina can discharge a hundred and forty million cubic yards of lava at one eruption; that Skaptar Jokul poured over the devoted plains of Iceland at one and the same time, two streams of lava, one seven and the other twelve miles wide, and forty or fifty miles long; that Cotopaxi glows at its summit like molten glass, and can project a mass a hundred cubic yards in volume,

for eight or nine miles; and that Vesuvius can bury towns,—we may form some faint idea of the scene that must have presented itself when these forces were extraordinarily active. When cities are buried under floods of lava, or showers of pumice-stones, when fields are converted into useless wastes of fused mud, and whole districts are covered with ruin, men are apt to view the earthquake and volcano as unmixed evils; but, when we reflect that the earthquake has been the sole means of bringing to the surface the evidence of the mineral treasures which lie so far below; that it has revealed our coal, salt, limestone, and clay—nay, that it even cofferdams our mines to let us work them—we shall see in it a great agent for redeeming man from the precarious and wretched life of a savage.

Fishes now appear for the first time; not the kingly salmon and turbot, but voracious creatures, armed with powerful means of destruction, and clothed in complete armour, their skins being as hard as bone, or rather composed of plates of bone or horn, fitting, in one class, edge to edge, like a tessellated pavement; in another, overlapping each other, like the slates of a roof, and furnished with a hook on the upper margin, to fit into a pit in the lower edge of the scale above. In some, a lustrous enamel covered the scales. It is supposed that this armour was in a measure a defence against the heat of the waters, but it is more likely that it served as a protection against a powerful enemy: the fish of this kind being very unscrupulous about attacking friend or foe when pressed by hunger. Like the sharks of our day, to which they are closely akin, they had the backbone prolonged into the tail, which was unevenly fluked, enabling them to turn upon their backs with great quickness. Some of them were strange-looking creatures; one, called a pterichthys, or flying-fish, must have shown like an immense tadpole, furnished with wings; another, the "buckler-headed fish," was defended in front by a shield of bone, shaped like a tulwar without a handle.

Some of the stone lilies of this period, which grew in countless millions and formed the marble of Derbyshire, and the Black Rock of Bristol, were also very beautiful, and indeed the mechanical contrivances in the shape of armour were never surpassed by any of Nature's later productions. One animal, called a holoptychius, was furnished with fluted-pot armour, which, ages afterwards, Oliver Cromwell, a practical genius and capital judge, selected as the best kind for a helmet, and the principle of which is now extensively adopted in our corrugated iron houses. It was also constructed so as to give a dead shock to blows: having a firm outer and inner coat, with a soft material between to act like sand-bags; finally its inner coat consisted of layers of fibres which crossed each other, as in moleskin, so as scarcely to admit of being torn.

After the old red sandstone had been deposited, a vegetation arose which has never been paralleled in the worst jungles of our tropical

climates. From India and Australia, to the lonely wastes of Baffin Bay and Melville Island, every foot of land was covered with ferns, reeds, club-mosses, and other wonders of the coal measures.

The ferns, it is well known, are flowerless plants, but they differed from their predecessors, the algæ, in having stems and leaves. Some of these tree-ferns attained an immense size. The reed, which resembled the mare's-tail now seen growing in our fens and ditches, was often twenty-four times as thick as that of the present day, and several yards high; the club-mosses attained such enormous dimensions, that fragments of them have been found forty-five feet long, and upwards of four feet in diameter, almost as large as the stiff-firs (*Araucarians*) belonging to this epoch.

Under a sky the heat of which was never chilled by a cool breeze, rooted in steaming, dank, bottomless morasses, heated by the scarcely subdued fires of the granite, these plants grew at an inconceivable rate. Some measure of this kind was needed, to unload the air of the carbon and store up immense forests in such a compact shape as coal. The aspect of those forests at an early period must have been inconceivably sombre. Gloomy, immeasurable torpid jungles of one sad whitish hue, they must have looked like groves of dead sea-weeds; an appearance often noticed in a slight degree in some parts of America when the clouds have intercepted the rays of the sun for some days together. The sunbeams, the chemical rays of which change the soft fibre into hard woody substance, and eliminate the colouring matter, or chlorophylle, only reached them late in the day, and clothed them with resplendent green.

Some of the club-mosses were beautifully marked with geometric patterns; one, figured by Miller, is carved like the stone-work of a church window in the waving style. The sigillaria, of which twenty-two species are found in British coal-fields alone, are remarkable for their sculptured stems. They are fluted vertically, like a Doric column, and each fluting is marked by a line of sculpture, where the vessels passed out from the stem to the leaves, running down its centre. This sculpture varied according to the species. In one it resembled the bolt-heads used by ship-carpenters; in another, a pair of beans set side by side; in a third, two rows of goggle-eyes stare at the spectator. These strange plants had roots differing from anything else, projecting from the centre like rays, and terminating abruptly in a circle, like the spokes of a cart-wheel. One of the stigmaria is beautifully marked like a meadow daisy, and its roots, or underground stems, end abruptly like a cucumber. One *ulodendron*, brought from the iron-shale of Leith, exhibits the peculiarity of having all its branches on one plane, like the tail of a peacock, or the Madagascar-tree called the "Traveller's Friend."

Plants of this class, without fruit or flower, were useless, except to a few insects. Even to

this day, cattle will not crop the fern, and the horse-tail reed is so distasteful on account of the silex it contains, that they will not touch it unless pressed by hunger. The reader will therefore be little surprised to learn that the chief inhabitants of the woods were hideous insects, such as cockroaches, scorpions, beetles, and the like; later on, however, in this epoch, traces are found of two-winged flies, butterflies, and the dragon-fly.

The fishes of this era, were armed with the most frightful means of destruction; teeth more sharp and trenchant than those of the crocodile; dorsal spines like huge beautifully-carved spear-heads; stings of immense strength, above a foot long, and furnished on each side with a thick-set row of barbs hooked downwards.

At the close of this epoch, the sun shone out in unclouded splendour, and the stars set their first watch, and the moon hung out her lamp; the air grew pure and bright; Nature took on her livery of green; and the oceans and lakes began to wear their deep pure hue. These changes grew more marked as the new red sandstone and limestone succeeded; climates and seasons began to appear; and for the first time we find animals confined to particular regions. Tufted plants, like dwarf palms, and nearly twenty different kinds of pine, have usurped the place of many of the first land plants, for though ferns still prevail in legions, and the horse-tail reed still grows in swamps, yet the gigantic club-mosses and other monsters of the vegetable kingdom are gone for ever.

With this change of the flora came the great lizards, creatures of enormous strength and bulk; one, the fish-lizard (*Ichthyosaurus*), with a head and teeth like those of a crocodile, and an eye as large as a dessert-plate, had its huge frame mounted on four paddles, which, aided by the sweep of its tail, must have enabled it to go like an express train through the waters, over which it reigned in undisputed mastery. Coeval with it, lived the *Plesiosaurus*, or original serpent, often eighteen feet long, with its immense neck reared high above the waters. The *Megalosaurus*, forty feet long, with hind legs almost two yards high, roamed by Stonesfield or Tilgate Forest: the huge *Iguanodon*, a herb-eating lizard which excited Cuvier's utmost astonishment, haunted the shores of the British Channel; its giant remains at Lewes, made classic ground by the genius of Gideon Mantell, were among the earliest treasures recovered from the stony depths. There was also the *Mosasaurus*, or great monster-lizard of Maëstricht, twenty-five feet long, with a head four feet in length, and the *Wealden-lizard*, twenty to thirty feet in length (*Hylæosaurus*) with an immense horny fringe, five to seventeen inches high on its back: while through the tree-fern groves flitted the huge flying-lizard (*Pterodactyl*); a real dragon, like a monstrous bat, with its dusky wings stretching twenty-seven feet across (or twice the sweep of the condor of the Andes, or the frigate-bird), and its powerful muzzle furnished with sixty teeth, like those of a crocodile. This crea-

ture's great spectral eyes must have enabled it to see by night, while it could swim, like the vampire-bat of Bonin, so that escape from it must have been almost impossible. Imagine this fiendish-looking creature rushing past at full speed!

One of the most startling facts in the physiology of the fish-lizards is their digestive power. Like the shark and dog-fish, they were furnished with a spiral intestine, like a cork-screw put into any small compass, and an enormous stomach, so that with an almost illimitable power of swallow they were not fettered by much bulk. This stomach is the most marvellous of known stomachs, and throws that of the ostrich, crocodile, or shark into the shade. It is well known that the shark will swallow, for some reason only known to himself, such matters as bundles of shavings, large tin cases, and similar dainties; but the fish-lizard was absolutely in the habit of gulping down young ichthyosauri several feet long!

Many of these animals were like an enormous crocodile, with the body of an elephant at least; but they were not quite such preposterous pieces of workmanship as has been represented. One was stated to have been dug up at Rugby a hundred and fifty feet long. Dr. Buckland gravely described those which once lived in the vicinity of what is now the lake of Blenheim, as having tails as large and as long as the steeples of Kidlington or Long Hambro'! Now, even the iguanodon, the giant of the wold, though computed by Cuvier to have been sixty, and by others from sixty to seventy feet long, really did not measure forty, or little more than half the size of a large whale.

There were crocodiles, also frogs as large as pigs, and tortoises in great number, while the waters of Margate, Whitby, and other parts of the coast, had their great ammonites and other gigantic shell-fish; but England does not seem to have ever been the haunt of those gigantic birds which once stalked over the muddy plains of New Zealand, Tasmania, and Connecticut—bipeds with a stride of from four to six feet, and feet nearly half a yard long; bones thicker than those of a horse, and whose capacious gizzards were found to have contained pebbles as large as marbles; swallowed either to promote digestion, or to gratify that indiscriminate appetite which prompts the ostrich to gulp down every indigestible article, from a penny-piece to a lady's parasol, or a carpenter's auger.

The sea and estuary had done their work. The teeming life of these waters had been so busy in forming the chalk, that this immense deposit, extending over many counties, was principally laid down by animals of such minuteness, that a cubic inch will contain ten millions of their shells. From this time, the huge marine saurians begin to die out, and even among those which inhabited the land, a remarkable diminution was taking place.

The ferns no longer clothed every hill and bank, as in the days of old; in lieu of them and club-mosses, large forests of palm-trees expanded

their feathery crowns under the hot London sun. Mr. Bowerbank found no less than thirteen species in the clay of Sheppey, among which are the date-palm, the cocoa-nut and the areca. Beneath, grew creeping plants of the melon order. A fragment of the day rolls by, and old England looks like a county from the United States, for the face of the land is covered with the plane, willow, and buckthorn. Another fragment, and the now familiar species of our day appear: while, just before the advent of man, come the plum and peach, the pear and apple.

It was at this time that the gigantic northern elephant, twice the size of the African elephant, fed on the young palm-trees, or plunged through tangled woods of birch and hazel. Tigers, as large again as the biggest Asiatic species, and hyenas, lurked and yelled in the ancient thickets; at least two species of rhinoceros, and three kinds of bear, roamed amid the forests; and the rivers had their hippopotamus, as bulky as that of Africa. There was an elk ten feet four inches high, and the opossum affected classic Oxford.

England does not seem to have been so much favoured as France, with those strange pachyderms which at the beginning of this epoch peopled the basin of Paris; singular beings of a cross breed between the horse, tapir, rhinoceros, and hog, varying in size from the river-horse to the hedgehog. They seem to have been peaceful animals; some, have fleshy trunks like tapirs; others, tails almost like otters, this appendage being in the *Ano plotheria* as long as the body, and very thick.

Nor does it seem to have been the abode of the huge mammals which succeeded them, such as the great Austrian or Bavarian mole (*Dinotherium*), which also lived by the Rhine—about eighteen feet long with a head three feet across; the mastodon, which once upon a time desolated the "old dominion," some of the grinders of which weigh from seventeen to twenty pounds, and which, with a height rivalling that of the largest elephant, seems to have reached a length of twenty-five feet; the great American sloths, one of which, the *megatherium*, with haunches five feet wide, was twelve feet long and eight high; nor the aurochs of Lithuania, unless the tradition of the water-bull which shook the Scotch hills with its roar, refer to this splendid creature.

These statements seem so marvellous, that an incredulous reader may well ask if imagination has not lent wings, even to science. How then will he receive the intimation that vast as are the proportions spoken of, they do not impress the mind so much as one single glance at the skeletons themselves? For so bulky were these creatures, that they must, with scarcely an exception, have been thicker, in proportion to their height, than the modern elephant; the legs of some, as the *dinotherium*, being well-nigh as thick as the body of a small pony; and the arm-bone (*humerus*) being in several animals at least three feet in girth at the thickest part. The femur, or thigh-bone, of the *megatherium*, is nearly half as thick through, as it is long, and is above three feet in circumference.

Quite in the dawn of this epoch lived the useful bee: not, as now, the companion of man whose haunts it rarely leaves for any distance, for it has been found buried in the amber, "locked up hermetically in its gem-like tomb—an embalmed corpse in a crystal coffin." Along with it came the moth and butterfly. And now, save where here and there a stray shark has lost its way, all the ravenous tyrants of our estuaries and coasts have given place to the codfish and herring, the salmon and haddock, and the other immensely valuable fishes which tenant the "barren ocean."

Towards the close of this epoch, a strange and fearful change took place; the climate became so cold that in many parts of our seas, dwelt shell-fish which now live only on the shores of Iceland or amid the fearful solitudes of Spitzbergen; the land, previously much larger than now, seems to have been broken up into islands and peninsulas; and from Snowdon and the Yorkshire hills, to Ronaldsay and Cape Wrath, winter reigned over a realm of glaciers and icebergs, haunted by the bear, the Siberian hare, and the reindeer; while the narwhal sought the ice-floes that drifted past the coasts of Sussex and Hampshire. Perhaps at this time the beaver first visited England, where, but for destroying man, it might have remained to this day; the jaw of this sagacious animal having been dug up, not fossilised, in Lincolnshire; nay, it has even been said that the beaver was killed in England so late as the time of Oliver Cromwell. Be this as it may, it is certain that a great part of England was below water, and that a sea separated the remainder from Wales. From this time it most probably assumed its present form, and the "old coast line" having been fixed, the land, in the course of ages, was again slowly elevated to a height of twenty or thirty feet above the level of the sea, where it must have remained for many a year: as we know by the wall of Antoninus, from the Frith of Forth to that of Clyde, being built to meet the present, not the old, coast-line; and by St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall being, even two hundred years previously, connected as now with the mainland.

After the land had been made a garden for his use—and earth, sea, and river had begun to bear food for him—came man, in his appointed time, to dwell for a season in the cave and wigwam, and seek a precarious existence with his rude canoe and clumsy implements of chase, preying on animals weaker than himself, and dying like the beast of prey, till he succeeded to the dignity of the cromlech and barrow. Had he lived in the times of these ferocious creatures, his lot would have been calamitous enough. Furnished even with such terrible appliances as the Armstrong gun and Enfield rifle, he would have had enough to do to hold his own; but, when his means of defence were the bow and sling, the snare and pitfall, he could not for a moment have entered the lists against animals from which the lion and rhinoceros would have fled in dismay. With one blow of its trunk, the mammoth would have levelled to the earth the largest African

elephant; one stamp of his mighty foot, and the contest was at an end. The Bengal tiger would have encountered the old English tiger on the same terms as the puma or jaguar would meet the lion; the iguanodon need not have condescended to contest matters with such puny antagonists. How then could man have coped with them? It was fitter that he should come as an equal and companion, till in due time he became master, and the heaven-born breath of reason slowly ripened and fashioned him into the powerful and highly-gifted creature he now is.

8. PAYING THE DOCTOR.

ALL my bills are out at last, "with Dr. Pil-draught's compliments." The British householder has had my little account duly delivered, and thinks to himself that my charge is rather high. Nevertheless, he is now writing me a cheque, I hope, to be enclosed in a friendly letter, or delivered to me with a warm shake of the hand.

In my mind, of course, English society is divided into two great classes, registered medical practitioners and patients. Of patients, there are three orders: those who can and do pay; those who can and don't pay; those who can't pay. Of these classes, the second is large, and the third is enormous. Of the cost of attendance upon it, one-tenth part comes out of the pocket of ratepayers, and nine-tenths are paid, I believe, by self and brothers. After deduction of this tax upon time and substance gladly paid, and of inevitable business expenses, I am above the mark in estimating eighty pounds a year as the average profit of a "registered medical practitioner." I should like the world to know how many pure physicians live in good houses and make a prosperous show, living upon their private substance through a fair half of their lives, before they receive more than ten fees in a twelvemonth. It would be well if a few thousand anxious general practitioners were suddenly relieved of the necessity of looking prosperous whatever be the pinch they suffer. The public has an instinct that the doctor is incompetent who is not in request, or—what is as bad—the doctors suppose that the public has an instinct of this sort. For my own part, I do not think it has. I doubt much whether any medical man is the better thought of for a brougham that he cannot afford.

Nevertheless, while the faculty, as a whole, is starved, the public that has money pays too heavily for sickness when it comes. Sickness comes also into a house much oftener than is right and necessary. Paying the doctor is most truly, for many people, a too heavy part of the new year's financial settlement. Now I have a fancy that the time is come when we might begin an attempt to set the whole business relation between doctor and patient upon a new and pleasant footing, to the enrichment of the medical profession, to the great diminishing of sickness and sorrow, as well as to the relief of Paterfamilias from all the horrors of a heavy

doctor's bill at the close of a season of domestic suffering.

As I have just been sending out my bills, including not a few fresh copies of old accounts, I, Alexis Pildraught, speak with a very lively sense of the uncomfortable working of the present system. Here are a few hundred names upon my ledger, names of people who are my friends, who trust their lives to me; they have looked to me for human help and solace in their hours of suffering or peril; for which reason I send in my bill.

That poor sensitive curate, Snovels, whose wife died when July was blossoming, and when he sat upon one side of the bed, I on the other, will avoid me proudly if I put him under obligation by not charging for eight months' attendance upon the lost mother of the little ones left to his charge. But I am miserable at the sight of the bill in which I have had to reduce my help and sympathy to figures, and I have not yet dared to send it in.

There is to Anne Baugh a bill delivered, seventeen and sixpence. Three years ago upon a winter night, she worshipped me with gratitude, because, at the cost of a night's rest and active personal attention in her cottage, I was whappy as to save the slender thread of her child's life from snapping. For a week she would have given me all she possessed. When Christmas came I charged for the whole attendance on that little patient seventeen shillings and sixpence. The bill has remained three years unpaid. I am an easy creditor, and she has always some more pressing claim; but she associates my help rendered to her that night with the idea of seventeen and sixpence. I associate her seventeen and sixpence with the idea of that human service rendered. She is embarrassed when she meets me. We are friends, with a vexatious cloud between us.

Sir John Dunderhead gave me last year a great deal of trouble. When first he met me after he had received my Christmas bill, he contrived coarsely to remind me that I knew he had a purse. My landlord has been, this year, among my patients; my bill has suggested to him the impression that I have a mind to give him a set off against my rent. I could seize the buttons of a dozen tradesmen who believe that I had their bills against me in mind when I made out the amount of mine to them. Nobody likes paying the doctor. Sickness itself has very likely made expenses during the past year unusually heavy or the earnings light, and then comes at the year's end a doctor's bill as extra charge from which it is but natural that most people should flinch.

Then, too, the doctor's charges being beyond ordinary housekeeping calculations, and coming usually from a gentleman who is not likely to descend to the form of a dun, are often the last to be paid. Very long credit, three and four years' credit, is taken of me even by rich and titled patients. But, when Alexis Pildraught started in the world, he found it hard to live for the first few years of his professional life mainly on book debts.

The change I have to propose is nothing very startling. It is only the practical encouragement of an idea frequently occurring to the minds of many people. Let a consulting physician or surgeon and the operator take his fees, but let us consider whether it be necessary or desirable that the general practitioner in medicine—the family attendant who is the friend of the house—should depend for his income on the money he can make of its misfortune. Let me look at home. The names of some three hundred friends who trust my skill are on my books. When any one of them over my dinner-table wishes me a prosperous and happy year, he wishes that some of my friends may catch fevers and small-poxes, that consumption may show itself, and that there may be one or two good lingering illnesses among the richer of them.

But suppose that, upon an understanding between me and my friends, each of them agreed to pay, according to his means, his family, and the average health of it, a fixed annual sum of two, or three, or five, or ten pounds for my services, then, without pressing hardly upon any one, I should have an income probably a little ampler than I have at present, and to wish me prosperity would be to wish that there might be the least possible illness among my friends. My list of patients would be as a comfortable little rent-roll from which some names would be erased from time to time and to which constant additions would be made. My private interest, as well as my good will, would make me active to prevent approach of sickness, or to meet it, when it is most easily subdued, at the first hour of its appearance. At present, sickness is commonly several days' march in advance of the doctor before he is called in to overtake and conquer it. Materfamilias has aggravated it too often with domestic physicking, out of her laudable desire to save the household funds from galloping consumption.

There could be no surer blow dealt against quackery—domestic and well meant, or of the shop fraudulent—than to remove the fear of doctors' bills and all check on the impulse to seek, in the first moment of doubt about health, competent advice. Costly as quackery is, its bait is cheapness.

Heads of families, unless they have obtained special instruction for themselves, are constantly in want of some small morsels of the counsel that a well-educated practitioner of medicine can give. Science is now applied to the art of preserving health, and the business relations between doctor and patient do not yet recognise thought for the maintenance of health as any part at all—still less as the chief part—of the medical practitioner's real business in life. But let him be paid by a fixed annual fee, and left unshackled by the dread of appearing to obtrude advice or medicine for the sake of the money it will bring him, and he will naturally fall into his right place as maintainer of health. Sanitary science will be the most profitable to him of all his studies. He will be quietly observant of the sources of disease in every house under his care,

and will advance the worldly interests of his friends, and himself alike, by seasonable hints, by direct information and suggestion. He will like nothing so much as a prompt summons, founded on the mere suspicion of approaching illness; and when illness comes he will be, if possible, more diligent than he is now in his endeavour to subdue it quickly and completely.

The plan I propose would serve also, in some degree, as a safeguard against unprincipled and incompetent men who hold diplomas. There will always be some of this class. Now, they pour medicine into the sick until the physie is a much more serious thing to recover from than the mere natural disturbance of the system. But if there were no more than the settled annual fee to receive, every unnecessary pill would be so much cash out of pocket. The swallowing of nauseous and pernicious drugs, for the benefit of a rogue's Christmas bills, would be at an end. The premium would be, not upon over-dosing, but upon under-dosing, even among the most competent men very often, and among ignorant men always, that can result only in improvement of the patient's prospect of recovery.

Any general adoption of the principle I advocate would also put an end to many forms of professional jealousy, would raise the tone of the profession, give it more dignity, and much greater facility for the performance of its duty to the public. Even the most hardened of us, if originally good for anything, often feels a natural reserve that restrains him from giving the help he desires to offer, but might be thought to obtrude for a commercial reason of his own. The bill is a ghost at the sick-bed, speculated about and dreaded by the friends of the sick, and afterwards always to be associated with the service rendered. The fee settled, without any relation to particular weeks of suffering and sorrow, would leave to the doctor his honest satisfaction, and to his friends their grateful recollection unalloyed.

Alexis Pildraught, speaking for himself alone, is very sure that a day must come, sooner or later, when the duty of maintaining health will receive such active attention that the relations between medical men and the public must be placed upon some such footing as this. Once fairly make the proposed change, and every man has, without burden to his means, the full use of such medical knowledge as he may think most trustworthy. At present, a household in full health, and with the paying power at its highest, pays nothing at all, and, when stricken most, pays the most heavily for aid of science. Who would not rather compound with his doctor for the yearly payment of an average on five or six years' bills, and have free use of him, than run whatever chance he may under the present system?

But what will my brethren tell me about such

an innovation? Perhaps there may be some who would expect to lose by it. I believe that it would be their gain. Nay, I am not afraid to suggest that it might double the wealth, as well as the influence, of the profession. That is, no doubt, because I am, like all schemers, very sanguine. Money would flow to us from the great multitude of the sound, instead of being taken only from the house of sickness. Healthy people, who but seldom incur doctors' bills, would gladly join the clientèle of those to whom they should look for aid when out of health, and would obtain a right to ask for useful information, as well as an insurance against doctors' bills by paying a small yearly fee. The wider the adoption of the principle, the lower might the fee be. Country doctors find it worth their while, as matter of income, to give their services to all the members of a club of mechanics, paying no more than four shillings apiece to have use of a doctor all the year round, and if all the people in the parish in and above that grade of life came into such a club, four shillings being paid for each of them, to his, her, or its own particular adviser, country doctors, as a body, would assuredly be richer than they are, except in very thinly-peopled districts, where either the doctor starves, or one or two rich land-owners will lay in physie by the hamper for the good of the profession.

But my suggestion does not contemplate a rough conversion of the public into a great national Sick Club, distributed according to the election of each member among its doctors. There could be no uniform rate. Healthy men should not have to pay for other men's inherited diseases. Twenty particular considerations might go to the determination of the annual fee paid by each individual, or household, for medical advice and aid. Even upon an average of past years, a fee could not be settled without some little reasonable forecast of the future. At any time it would, of course, be open to reconsideration, and terminable at any moment, with loss of the current year's fee, by the person who dissolved the contract.

Now, if the change I propose be desirable, the first step to it must be discussion. All that Alexis Pildraught here proposes is the seasonable exchange of a little discussion, among all doctors and patients whom these matters may concern.

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